



Office of the County Executive

Monroe County, New York

Maggie Brooks
County Executive

October 11, 2005

To The Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
39 West Main Street
Room 407
Rochester, New York 14614

Honorable Legislators:

I am submitting for your review and approval the proposed 2006 Annual Operating Budget for Monroe County.

This is the second budget that I am submitting as County Executive. I am proud, once again, to honor my commitment to the taxpayers of our community by holding the property tax rate flat for Monroe County. At \$9.10, it is the same rate that this legislative body set for the previous two County Budgets.

This budget is balanced, fiscally responsible and reasonably funds services that are important to the residents of our community.

This budget increases total County spending by \$16.6 million, or 1.7 percent. Mandated spending, which accounts for 78.6% of the Budget, increases \$12.2 million. Non-Mandated spending, which accounts for the remaining 21.4% of the Budget, increases \$4.4 million. Even with the application of measures enacted by the State of New York to control the growth of mandated costs to county governments, the 2006 Budget shows mandated costs, in gross dollars, growing essentially three-times faster than non-mandated costs.

The 2006 Budget is fully funded. However, the multi-year forecast, which I have included, predicts a cumulative budget gap of \$102.3 million for 2007 and 2008, with projected cost increases exceeding available revenue in those years.

Therefore, with the tremendous budgetary challenges that face us, the 2006 Budget provides our community with fiscal breathing room. It does not slash vital programs or end necessary services. It holds spending below the rate of inflation, keeps the property tax rate flat and provides for the deficit-free operation of County Government in the upcoming year. In doing so, passage of this Budget will allow us the opportunity to determine the next steps we need to take in order to achieve our financial goal of structural balance, without the specter of crisis looming immediately over us. It is imperative that we come together during the additional time this Budget provides us and take these steps, together. We cannot afford to allow time to run out and let 2006 come-and-go without addressing the underlying fiscal challenges. Otherwise, the crisis we wish to avert will certainly descend upon us.

I am confident that we will join one another in the spirit of collaboration that has embraced our community in the last 22 months. We will not rest complacent but look beyond the present and right the structural issues that continue to erode the progress we achieve with the passage of each year's budget. Working together, we will build a stronger community by ensuring the long term fiscal stability of Monroe County government.

Sincerely,



Maggie Brooks
Monroe County Executive